

Kissing the Thumb when Hearing the name of Rasulullaah SAW

Q: Ilm-10: The August 1960 edition of a monthly magazine here in Ahmadabad called Tayyaba (in Gujarati). The magazine states that there are many Ulema who despite not practising on the Hanafi Madh'hab, they falsify the Hanafi Madh'hab and mislead unsuspecting Muslims by telling them it is a Bid'ah to kiss the thumb when taking the name of Rasulullaah SAW. especially during the Adhaan. They say that those Ulema who honour Rasulullaah SAW. are perpetrators of Bid'ah. The question now arises whether the proof given for kissing the thumb is correct or not. Please reply in detail.

Answer: Reciting the Durood when the name of Rasulullaah SAW. is taken or heard is the correct way to honour Rasulullaah SAW. and is proven in authentic Ahadeeth. The Fatwa states that it is Mustahab to recite Durood every time Rasulullaah SAW.'s name is taken or heard in a gathering and Waajib to recite it at least once. There is however no authentic or weak Hadith stating that the thumb be kissed. Therefore, regarding the kissing of the thumb to be a Sunnah proven from the Ahadeeth and a way of showing honour to Rasulullaah SAW. is an incorrect and baseless belief. This is a practice of those who initiate Bid'ah practices and must be avoided. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Whoever introduces into the Deen something that is not a part of it must be rejected." Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "Whoever does something that is not our practice, then he is rejected."

It is also incorrect to regard as Sunnah the act of kissing the thumbnail and placing it on the eyes during the Adhaan. Just as wrong will be to think that this is proven from the Ahadeeth, that it is a way of showing respect to Rasulullaah SAW. that it is a sign of being a Hanafi and to think that who ever does not do it deserves our scorn. Acting in this manner is tantamount to making alterations to the Deen.

There are, however, some Ulema who use certain weak Ahadeeth to claim that it is permissible or even Mustahab to kiss the thumb when the name of Rasulullaah SAW. is mentioned during the Adhaan and to then place the thumbnail on the eyes. However they have stated this as a treatment for the eyes and not because it is some form of Ibaadah or a Sunnah or to show respect to Rasulullaah SAW. In fact, the Fatwa of Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan also suggests this. However, people have exaggerated this act and regard those who do not do it as opponents to the honour of Rasulullaah SAW. and to the Hanafi Madh'hab. This is wrong and must be avoided. It is an accepted principle that giving a Mustahab act more status than is due to it will make it Makrooh. In fact, when Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. saw people giving undue importance to starting with them right, he declared that it to be Makrooh, fearing that people would soon start regarding it as a Waajib (compulsory) act.

While the Ahadeeth speak highly of fasting during the days of Beedh (13th, 14th and 15th of every month), some jurists classified it to be Makrooh during their times because people laid so much emphasis on it that they feared the people would soon start regarding it to be a Waajib (compulsory) act.

The Ahadeeth mentioning kissing the thumb during Adhaan have been quoted in books identifying fabricated Ahadeeth such as Mowdu'aat Kabeef . Tadhkiratul Mowdu'aata and Fawaa'idul Majmoo'ah fil Ahaadeethil Mowdu'ah. The authors of all these books clearly state that these narrations are not authentic.

Allaama Suyuti RAH. clearly declares that the narrations of kissing the thumbs during Adhaan are all fabricated. While it may be permissible with certain conditions to practise on a weak narration, it is not at all permissible to practise on a fabricated narration. Haafidh Ibn Hajar RAH. states a weak Hadith may be practised on only if it is not too weak and when a person does not believe with conviction that it is from Rasulullaah SAW.

Allaama Ibn Daqeequl Eid RAH. says that while practising on a weak narration is permissible, it will cease to be permissible when it is used as a gauge (for example used to classify one as a Hanafi or a Sunni if one practises and as a Wahaabi if one does not). When this takes place, it will not be permissible to practise on it. Allaama Shaatbi RAH. says that while some acts may be permissible or even Mustahab, they ought to be avoided when there is fear of its status being altered or itself being altered. Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi RAH. says that when etiquette and Mustahabbaat are regarded to be as important as a Waajib (compulsory) act, it is tantamount to altering Deen.

All of the above make the issue of kissing the thumbs very clear. While some of the books mentioned in the Fatwa you have sent are authentic, others are not. However, Allaama Barkali RAH. , Allaama Isaamud Deen RAH. Allaama Jalaalud Deen Murshidi RAH., Allaama Mullah Ali Qaari RAH. and Allaama Shaami RAH. have prohibited quoting from these books unless what they say has been substantiated elsewhere. Some of these are Fataawaa Soofiyya, Jaami'ur Rumooz, Kanzul Ibaad, Khazaanatur Riwaayaat and Sharhu Makhtasar.

We will now quote form the works of Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan, the founder of the Barelwi group. Someone once asked him: "It is the practice of most people to kiss their thumbs during the Adhaan and Faatiha. The Ulema say that this is correct and even show Ahadeeth to substantiate their opinion. Is this correct or not?"

Here are the pertinent words that Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan himself wrote: "No authentic narration from Rasulullaah SAW. proves that the thumb should be kissed and the thumbnails placed on the eyes when hearing the name of Rasulullaah SAW. during the Adhaan. Those narrations speaking about it are questionable. Therefore, people would be wrong to regard them as proof, to regard the act as Masnoon or emphasised or to scorn those who do not practise it. [Abarrul Maqaal Pgs. 11-12]

In the above Fatwa, Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan states his disapproval for the statements in certain books like Fataawaa Soofiyya, Jaami'ur Rumooz, Kanzul Ibaad, etc. that mention that the act of kissing the thumb is Mustahab. He states further that a person may practise this only if he does so to improve his eyesight and without the conviction that it is a Sunnah or proven from the Ahadeeth. He also adds that doing it during the Faatiha is not proven and it is best that this act be avoided.

The above makes it clear that even according to Molvi Ahmad Riza Khan, the act of kissing the

thumb is not at all correct during the Faatiha and not proven from any authentic Hadith when it concerns the Adhaan. He states that it is not Sunnah and may be done only to improve the eyesight with the following conditions: (1) it is not done with the intention of Sunnah, (2) it is not done with the intention of it being substantiated from any Ahadeeth and (3) it is done without regarding those who do not do it as wrongdoers. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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